

ENGLISH



TURKU CATHEDRAL



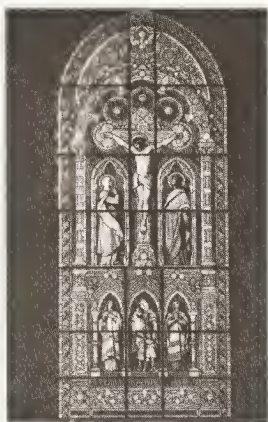
**T**urku Cathedral is the mother church of the Lutheran Church of Finland, and the country's national shrine. It is also regarded as one of the major records of Finnish architectural history. The history of the Cathedral over the centuries is closely linked with that of the people. Yet the church is no museum: it is in constant use first and foremost for divine worship, and is also frequently used for musical events. Turku Cathedral is now over seven hundred years old. As the town of Turku began to emerge in the course of the 13th century as the most important trading centre in Finland, the Bishop's see of the Diocese of Finland was transferred from its previous location at Koroinen, some distance further up on the same bank of the Aura River, to the middle of the town. By the end of the 13th century, a new stone church had been completed on the site of the former wooden-built parish



church on Unikankare Mound, and it was consecrated as the Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Henry (the first Bishop of Finland) in 1300.

The first Cathedral was smaller than the present building. Its east front was where the pulpit now stands, and its roof was considerably lower than now. Extensions were made to the Cathedral throughout the Middle Ages. During the 14th century, a new choir was added, from which the octagonal Gothic pillars in the present chancel originate. Throughout the Middle Ages, the High Altar was located opposite the easternmost pillars of the nave, until it was transferred to its present location in the apse, in what had previously been the Chapel of All Saints, in the mid-17th century. During the 15th century, side-chapels were added along the north and south sides of the nave, containing altars dedicated to various saints; by the end of the Middle Ages these numbered 42 in all. The roof-vaults were also raised during the latter 15th century to their present height of 24 metres. Thus, by the beginning of the modern period, the church had approximately taken on its present shape.

The major later addition to the Cathedral is the tower, which has been rebuilt many times, as a result of repeated fires. The worst damage was caused by the Great Fire of Turku in 1827, when most of the town was destroyed, along with both the tower and the interior of the Cathedral. The present tower, constructed after the Great Fire, reaches a



height of 101 metres above sea level, and is visible over a considerable distance as the symbol of both the Cathedral and the city. Most of the present interior also dates from the restoration carried out in the 1830s, following the Great Fire. The altarpiece, depicting the



Transfiguration of Christ, was painted in 1836 by the Swedish artist Fredrik Westin. The reredos behind the High Altar, and the pulpit in the crossing, also both date from the 1830s, and were designed by the distinguished architect C. L. Engel. The walls and roof in the chancel are decorated with frescos in the Romantic style by the court painter R. W. Ekman, the father of painting in Finland, which depict events from the life of Jesus, and two key events in the history of the Finnish Church: the baptism of the first Finnish Christians by Bishop Henry by the springs at Kupittaa, and the presentation to King Gustav Vasa by the Reformer Michael Agricola of the first Finnish translation of the New Testament.

The side-chapels originally containing altars dedicated to various saints have subsequently been converted into funeral vaults; and up to the end of the 16th century, graves were also set into the floor of the Cathedral. Consequently, the Cathedral now houses the graves and memorials of many of the great names of Finnish history. Among the major medieval figures buried in the Cathedral are several bishops — Hemming, Magnus II Tavast, Olaus Magni, Konrad Bitz, and Magnus III Särkilahti — and the famous Constable of the Castle at Viipuri (Vyborg), Knut Posse. Post-Reformation bishops buried here include Isak Rothovius and the three bishops Gezelius. In the funeral vaults alongside the nave are buried several 17th-century military commanders, including Torsten Stålhandske (the commander of the famous Finnish "Hakkapeliitta" cavalry), and Field Marshals Åke Tott and Evert Horn. Undoubtedly the most famous tomb



in the Cathedral, however, is the sarcophagus of Queen Karin Månsdotter, the wife of King Erik XIV, who spent her later years in Finland, and was buried in the Cathedral in 1613. The stained-glass windows in the chapels along the north side of the nave date from the 1870s, and are the work of Wladimir Swertschkoff.

**I**n the course of the centuries, the Cathedral has suffered many adversities: its once rich collections have been plundered in time of war, and damaged by fire. A collection of some of the surviving items, however, has now been placed on display in the Museum in the South Gallery. A major renovation of the Cathedral was completed in 1979, including the installation of modern equipment. The Cathedral has now for the most part been restored to its medieval form, with the exception of the redecorations carried out after the Great Fire of Turku, which have been retained. Finally, a new 81-stop great organ, built by the Finnish organ-builders Veikko Virtanen Ltd, was installed in 1980.

Regular Services in Finnish in Turku Cathedral:

Sundays and Holy Days: Divine Service 10 a.m.

Evening Prayer 6 p.m.

Wednesdays: Holy Communion 8 a.m.

Thursdays: Holy Communion 12 noon

Saturdays: Holy Communion 6 p.m.

Services are held in Swedish (Sunday, 12 noon)  
as announced.

The International Evangelical Church:

Service in English: once a month on Sunday 4 p.m.,  
in the Sharpshooter's Chapel, not during summer.

Evening Music: Wintertime second Tuesday in the month  
7.30 p.m. Summertime every Tuesday 8 p.m.

The Cathedral museum in the south gallery is open daily.



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